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The AMERICAN SPECTATOR A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

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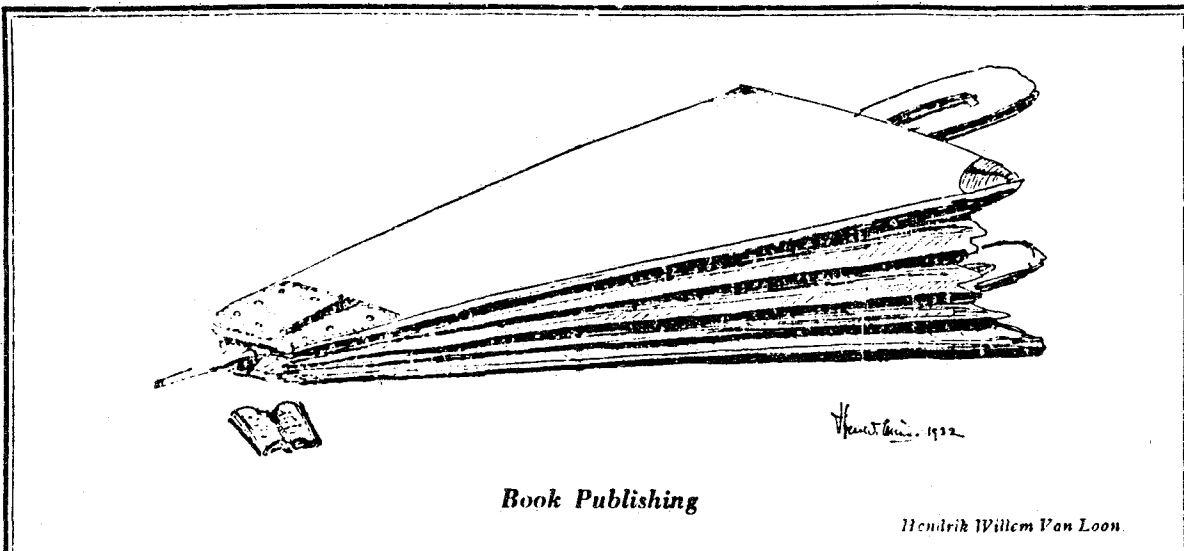
EDITORIAL

Now that we are equipped with every conceivable device for the promotion of international peace, international good will is fast disappearing. Never before have the nations of the world been torn by so many reciprocal hates, fears and rivalries. There is now so much international understanding that civilized men must sigh for the good old days when international ignorance was bliss, when communications were slow, uncertain and difficult, and democracies had no voice in foreign policy. Then the masses of the plain people attended to their own business, instead of listening to radio speeches from Geneva or Tokio, supporting schemes for the abolition of war, and voting for people as ill-equipped as themselves to express any opinion upon matters of diplomacy. Then, at least, there was relative peace, broken only by wars of relatively restricted scope, conducted by professionals, and unadorned by the scientific, economic and intellectual horrors which Progress has added to modern warfare.

As late as 1870 it was still possible for two first-class European Powers to go to war without trying to compel all civilized citizens within their borders to descend to the level of hooligans. The ideal of International Disarmament was fortunately still in its infancy. Renan could pursue his German studies without being baited by bellicose journalists and military bullies, just as, in Napoleonic times, Beethoven and Goethe were undisturbed by appeals to do their intellectual bit against the French. In other words, the only true form of international understanding had not yet been declared a crime. Nowadays, if two of the cheapest little creations of the Versailles Treaty start a brawl or a pogrom, the entire world may find itself involved, such is our unparalleled advance in the direction of interdependence, enlightened toleration, peaceful coöperation, and the Biblical spectacle of the wolf lying down with the lamb.

On a moment's reflection it will be obvious that too much international understanding is at the root of this. We have too many societies for the promotion of peace, too many international conferences, too many delegations to cement friendship between the nations, too many allies who have sworn to love each other; in brief too many international get-together meetings of one kind or another. This in itself would be bad enough, but whatever mischief these organizations, committees, leagues and conferences fail to do by way of stirring up animosity is admirably supplemented by the efforts of the peoples themselves. They know, or think they know, too much about each other. Cheap travel, broadcasting and battalions of foreign correspondents, who spare nothing on cable charges, are responsible for a world in which people who do not know their own countrymen, who are totally incapable of making a rational decision in elementary matters of domestic policy, imagine that they are now the arbiters of the universe. Because the Albanians have heard Rudy Vallée croon and have roared at the antics of Mickey Mouse, they are reckoned, by some mysterious process, as participating in the great modern get-together movement.

Probably nothing has ever more effectively served to distort the views held of each other by the various nations than the modern time- and space-annihilating inventions. Paris is much nearer to London, Berlin, Moscow and New York than it was two hundred years ago, but are the French any



closer to the English, Germans, Russians and Americans of today than they were in the eighteenth century? If anything, the very contrary is true. Benjamin Franklin and Tom Paine and Mr. Jefferson knew much more of France and the French mind than do Senator Borah, Mr. Mellon and Huey Long. When the thirty-six hour flight across the Atlantic becomes a daily commonplace, the process of mutual misunderstanding will have been to that extent accelerated, provided, of course, that the achievement of that consummation has not been preceded by the wiping out in aerial and gas warfare of all the nations who were theoretically to be brought so closely together by the triumph of aviation and the other marvels of our scientific age.

All of these marvels, each in a thousand different ways, contribute directly to the defeat of the ideal of an intelligently harmonious world. Does anybody believe, for example, that the movies have raised the prestige of America in the eyes of the millions abroad who are more familiar with Hollywood stars than a minority of intelligent foreigners once was with New England literature? When Henry Adams was in London, was he bored by Englishmen who complained that the talkies were destroying the English language? More people in England are interested in American phonograph records of the jazz variety than ever heard of Bryce's "American Commonwealth." Which of the two is preferable as an instrument of international understanding? American broadcasting programs are so dreadful that Canada has already taken steps to escape. But think of the ill-omened day when an entire peace-loving world will tune in on Amos 'n' Andy and their political equivalents.

The Editors are depressed to learn that the population of Atlanta, Ga., has increased from 200,616 to 270,366.

THE GERSHWIN MYTH by ALLAN LINCOLN LANGLEY

Prior to the première by Paul Whiteman of the "Rhapsody in Blue," Gershwin was the most striking and original figure in the Broadway musical galaxy. He had turned out show after show, and was enjoying increasing réclame and popularity. This was deserved; in Gershwin there was, in addition to song and jazz fecundity, a peculiar emotional consanguinity with the gaiety, daring and double-entendre that characterized the theatre in the boom decade. Jazz, both rhythmical and sentimental, was in its heyday and Gershwin wrote superlatively in its limited vein.

Gershwin continued to write show after show with no noticeable deterioration. But the "Rhapsody in Blue," an immediately exciting ambassador to musical ports, divided its composer's field in two. Shortly afterward appeared in succession the "Piano Concerto," "An American in Paris," and more recently the "Second Rhapsody (in Rhythms)." Gershwin rapidly achieved the sanction of the concert-hall and the consideration of some of the important conductors and critics. The world in general was informed that America at last had a great and original composer. Appropriately enough for the concert entrepreneurs, the new genius had the additionally laudable faculty of packing auditoriums. His works were produced, through interested patrons, in Europe; they performed wonders in reducing Stadium deficits. The new genius had worked an extraordinary miracle; he could make Art pay dividends. History was made.

But, one asks, actually by whom? And for whom? It must be emphasized that in America equilibrium in artistic estimates is still a rare occurrence. Any meteoric rise of a composer to fame in our orchestral fields is, in these days of symphony budgets and critic-box-office liaisons, partly suspect. On another front, it is always observable that popular acclaim itself exerts an influence, at least temporarily, on press comment, often causing hilarity for dispassionate historians and playing havoc with critics' reputations for consistency and penetration. Thirdly, the immediate inerness of general musical judgment, accompanied by its singular scarcity of authoritative analysis, allows inordinate periods to pass before mature appraisals are widely reached. These factors, as well as others too involved to discuss here, have contributed enormously to the building of the Gershwin myth.

Demonstration is simple. The Whiteman première of the "Rhapsody in Blue" was a mild sensation. The "Rhapsody" was legitimate jazz, orchestrated

in jazz tradition and played by a legitimate jazz orchestra in a professedly jazz concert. So far, so good. There the matter would ordinarily have ended. For while many distinguished persons were attracted by the "Rhapsody," no cultivated musician, from the very beginning, was fooled for a minute by its lack of constructive distinction, not by the self-conscious, artificial connective material which linked its different melodies.

But the New York Symphony was then approaching the end of an unequal struggle with the Philharmonic for prestige. It had, through the success of Mengelberg, been forced long before this to introduce guest-conductors. What better than to discover a great American composer? The Philharmonic's preliminary indifference to the Gershwin comet afforded an excellent point of departure. The New York Symphony caused it to be bruited about that Gershwin, at the behest and with the encouragement of Dr. Damrosch, would compose a jazz piano concerto which would presumably establish once and for all the existence of an indigenous genius and incidentally heap new laurels on his patron who, as has already been observed, was then badly in need of fresh publicity. It worked like a charm. Carnegie Hall was sold out, and all the way from the highest critics to *The New Yorker* the matter was taken with an unprecedented seriousness. Fully established as the most significant figure in American symphonic music, past or present, Gershwin departed for France. Thence he returned with "An American in Paris." The merger of the two major New York orchestras brought its première under the auspices of the hitherto indifferent Philharmonic, as the high spot of Mr. Damrosch's final active year. Widespread introductory ballyhoo; another sold-out house; generous and voluminous program notes by Deems Taylor—what more could a composer ask?

After this there was a considerable hiatus; but two years later appeared in quick succession the "Second Rhapsody" and the "Rumba." All five were on an all-Gershwin program which last Summer broke the Stadium attendance record. No other American composer had so far achieved the dignity, even in a Summer series, of confining a major orchestra to a program entirely of his own works. Victor Herbert was popular in the past, as is Jerome Kern at present. And the former at least wrote his own effective orchestrations (in passing it is only fair to mention that Kern has his Bennett and that Gershwin in earlier days at least, had his Grofé and later, his Daly.) But no one has put either Herbert or Kern in Carnegie Hall as a popular symphonist, nor given all-Herbert or all-Kern programs in the Stadium, nor yet transported any of their work to Italy for American-music festivals.

It was the "Concerto" that made fools of the critics. Mr. Chotzloff rhapsodized that Gershwin was a great genius. Mr. Gilman, viewing with natural alarm the anachronism of jazz tortured into classical forms, yet committed the naïve blunder of advising Gershwin to take to the mountains and find his soul. One would have thought it fairly obvious that the Gershwin soul was already endemic to Broadway. In justice to Gilman, it should be recorded that he lived to atone for this particular sentimentality by condemning roundly last season the "Second Rhapsody." But for a long time no single commentator of repute had either the honesty or courage to announce boldly that, both as inspiration or mechanical invention, the "Concerto" was a profoundly amorphous and meretricious work. It undoubtedly, in the first and second movements, contains the best semi-serious jazz music of all Gershwin's attempts of symphonic size; but when these themes run out, and spurious Chopinesque padding is resorted to, the effect to any discriminating ear is first absurd, and then disgusting.

Except for the crudest and most elementary structural contrasts, there is not in a single one of the "symphonic" Gershwin works even a pretense of spontaneous form, nor any inherent resourcefulness in development. With the exception of a few particular orchestral tricks (such as the clarinet glissandos in the "Rhapsody in Blue" and various other routine jazz attributes) the orchestrations are blatant, involved and ordinary, with constant alternation of straining for effect with genuflection to traditions foreign to the composer's motivation.

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The Editors are of the opinion that what is presently most needed for the preservation of civilization is an international Horn and Hardart.

THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

by THEODORE DREISER

Probably the very earliest artistic literary temperaments of America turned to the great realistic masters of the novel in Europe for inspiration and guidance in portraying the life of America. In such histories of American literature as I have read, none of the references to the sources of such early attempts is important. Beginning, however, with "Typee," by Melville, Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" and the very individual, if not purely realistic, approaches of both Poe and Whitman, we have in these, at least, Americans who appear to owe little, if anything, to their contemporaries abroad. As a matter of fact, Europe and the world have since learned from them.

For the actual date of the first strictly realistic picture inspired by the American scene, we must go back to the early fifties. "The Diary of a Forty-Niner," found in an abandoned miner's hut in California, is a remarkable piece of actuality and naturalism. In it, in the flesh and at work in his gold-sprinkled mountain streams, we find the true forty-niner. This book will not die. However, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Dred" and "The Scarlet Letter" are combinations of romance and realism. As for the follow-up in America, it soon presented such relatively realistic personages as Henry James, William Dean Howells, Bret Hart, Mark Twain and Robert Grant. Personally, and from the modern realistic standpoint, I would reject most of James as too narrowly and thinly class-conscious, and certainly Howells as too socially indifferent and worse, uninformed, save for "Their Wedding Journey." Despite his highly conventional "Rise of Silas Lapham," Howells may be unceremoniously dismissed.

With these eliminations, the realistic procession moves on to 1886, when Chicago presented Henry B. Fuller and his "With the Procession," quite as sound a piece of realism as that or any other decade has produced. In fact, Fuller appears to have introduced for the first time the purely American realistic novel. In it he pictures the era following the Civil War and, through the labors and psychology of his characters and the post-Civil War commercial and social atmospheres, we are permitted to glimpse the true Chicago American scene of the day. In fact, in that book much more than in the hundreds of lesser and negligible commentaries that have succeeded it, we are already in touch with the beginnings of Big Business and its attendant social milieu. If there is such a person as the father of American realism, Henry B. Fuller is that man.

But that was 1886, and since that time nearly a half-century has lumbered by, and in the matter of any sound portrayal of American life, what have we? If one accepts the masters of realism in France, Russia, Germany or England as guides, one would have to pre-suppose a literary credo which would insist that the main battle of man is with his fate, that human character is ever pitted against ultimately destructive circumstances, and that the battle, if not lost in the full tide of action, is most certainly lost later through the natural waning of youth and strength and all the ambitions and successes that accompany man's best years.

And in the very next realistic portrayals of American life we find this credo in full swing. Two of the earliest of these arrived practically at the same time: Stephen Crane with his "Red Badge of Courage," often referred to as the pioneer realistic work in the American field, and Hamlin Garland with "Main Travelled Roads," a realistic study of the rural life of his day, published in 1894. In these, man certainly battles, and hopelessly, with his fate.

Following these men we have, in March 1899, Frank Norris' "McTeague," said by his brother Charles to have been begun in 1891 but not finished until 1897, and not published until March 1899. Here we have as fine an illustration of what American realism might be as America offers. It is the proper successor to "With the Procession." One year later, there appeared "Quicksand," by Hervey White, stern and compelling; "The Story of Eva," by Will Payne, another forceful book; "The Damnation of Theron Ware," by Harold Frederic, as true as it was moving; and, by Brand Whitlock, "The 13th District," another valuable effort, though spoiled by its apparently hearty acceptance of current moral pretense. Also in that year, "Sister Carrie." All these were as instantly spewed forth by the religiosity and spurious morality of the day as though compounded of the most virulent poisons. Indeed, their authors, like myself with "Sister Carrie," were rejected and damned by public, publisher and critic alike, as either worthless or shameless.

* * *

I lived through that period. I read the works in question and contemplated their merit and promise with extreme pleasure and approbation. However even though my own book was suppressed and the others neglected, and the second novel by Frank Norris, "The Pit," issued in 1902, betrayed and aborted by the crass commerciality of his literary advisers, I failed to understand that it was not alone the American publisher, the newspaper or the critics of that day, but rather the very character or mental illusion of the American people that was fatal to any honest approach to the hard, coarse life that was being lived and that would not face itself or permit any of its would-be literary repre-

sentatives to do so. In short, the suppression of the latter was not by any publisher but rather by the American public itself. And it was complete. They and their books were dead; and, with the exception of "McTeague" and "Sister Carrie," so remain to this day. Indeed, as late as 1908, when he was already reviewing for *The Smart Set*, I found no less a critic than Henry L. Mencken in complete ignorance not only of the work of Norris but of these other contemporaries of mine. Also as to who the true pioneers in this field were. In proof of this I suggest that anyone interested examine Mencken's introduction to "McTeague" in the collected edition of Norris' work published in 1929, where he will find him referring to Norris as the pioneer of American realism, ignoring Melville, James, Wharton, Fuller and Crane. H. G. Wells is still sure that it was Stephen Crane who led the van.

It was Henry B. Fuller himself who, in 1913, explained to me why he had not gone on with his work. The reason was, as he then stated it, that he was most vociferously and outrageously assailed by a puritan or romantic and mentally undernourished band of critics, who had proceeded to shout that his contributions were not only libels on life but worthless as reading matter. In his own Chicago world and circle of friends he had been met with not only personal disapproval but contumely. Sensitive to, as well as fond of, the society of which he was a part, as he explained to me, and finding himself facing social as well as literary ostracism, he desisted. In Chicago in 1913, Hamlin Garland also told me that the reality of the coarse phases of the daily life of the world which he observed, and upon which he had touched in "Main Travelled Roads," was not so much too much for his pen as for his social courage and connections. He had married well, and realism adequate to the American life of the day spelled, as in my case, social ostracism. I am sure that both Will Payne and Harold Frederic, attacked as they were for their realistic ventures, were glad enough to sink into the bejewelled arms of *The Saturday Evening Post*, where later their meretricious labors appeared.

* * *

But the story is by no means complete. There are at least three aspects which bring this dramatic opening to a ludicrous climax. One of these was the line of pseudo-realistic heroes who, preceding and immediately succeeding these pioneers, in frill and fustian took possession of the stage in the name of realism: 1. Richard Harding Davis, (he of the Van Bibber stories); 2. Robert W. Chambers, (his "King in Yellow" acclaimed by no less a person than James Huneker); 3. Paul Leicester Ford, (one book, "The Honorable Peter Sterling," hailed as great realism); 4. Brand Whitlock, (after all, this side of sex, or safe within the marriage conventions, an honest realist); 5. Robert Herrick, (a romantic with realistic yearnings); 6. O. Henry, (except for a half dozen stories, plain literary vaudeville); 7. Jack London, (equal parts of realism and romance, mixed to suit the current popular taste); 8. David Graham Phillips, (hailed by Frank Norris and Mencken as a master of his craft; a straw man in a literary cornfield); 9. Booth Tarkington, (sweet sixteen and love everlasting); 10. Will Levington Comfort, (God is on his throne); 11. George Bronson Howard, (a romantic determined to be realistic, but without understanding); 12. Arthur Train, (a romantic intrigued by the realism of the law business); 13. Harvey Fergusson, (crowned by Mencken but no other); 14. Joseph Hergesheimer, (now reduced to perfumes and lingerie and still supported by Mencken but no other); and 15. Samuel Hopkins Adams, (a statistician determined to use the novel as a means of social reform).

The second phase is as ridiculous as the first; it is even preposterous. It appears to have been built around the dogma that not only could genius for realism be encouraged, but that it could be fostered and nourished to such an extent that it would bring forth an entire school of American realists. The sources of inspiration for this idea were the pioneers above mentioned. Its critical sponsors were first and foremost Huneker and, after him, Mencken. For Norris, already dead at thirty-one, had been acclaimed for "McTeague" and "The Octopus." The fate of "Sister Carrie," presumably entombed in America by Frank Doubleday but nevertheless alive in England and on the Continent, was an added filip. There were even those who had read "Quicksand," "The Damnation of Theron Ware," and "The Story of Eva," and had thereby acquired a foretaste of what an American *comédie humaine* might be. It had whetted their zest for a really significant American portrayal, and as early as 1907, on the part of Huneker, and 1909, on

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THE WORST BOOK OF THE MONTH

BOOMS AND DEPRESSIONS. By Irving Fisher.
5 x 7 1/2. Pp. 258. \$2.50.
New York: Greenberg.

THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 5)

the part of Mencken, there were calls for realism of the soundness of Zola and Balzac.

Norris being dead, I, for one, was singled out by Messrs. Huncker and Mencken and further efforts in this direction were expected of me. After that date, each new writer of any realistic promise was favored with commendations often far beyond his deserts. This was true of Jack London, O. Henry and David Graham Phillips, to name but three. Indeed, so anxious became the watch, so sharp the look-out, that by 1909 or 1910, the date of the assumption of the critical control of *The Smart Set* by Messrs. Mencken and Nathan, there had already been established in that forward-looking editorial office a school for young American realists, with Mencken and, in so far as the drama was concerned, George Jean Nathan, in supreme command.

Thereafter, in the quickly over-awed and incidentally enthusiastic literary departments of almost every college and school throughout the country there were set up courses offering complete instruction in the art of realism. The horrendous result is with us to this hour. My own library shelves now bulge with the pseudo-realistic literary offspring of this era, whose inspiration can be traced to Mencken's door. Indeed, through his loud literary cheer-leading, every newspaper and periodical of any critical standing was soon about the business of introducing, not only monthly but weekly, some new great spirit, the sure bearer of the American Masterpiece! And to further insure the latter's recognition there was also introduced about the same time the jacket blurb, carrying the publisher's own excited endorsement, his hand upon his heart.

More, by reason of America's new big publishing tactics in regard to the book business and its profits, this national expectancy was at last capitalized as a commercial asset to which every commercially ambitious, as well as dishonest, publisher could resort in quest of sales. In fact, until the year 1929, when our national depression arrived and hoopa in all forms was compelled to modify itself, the discovery and presentation of realistic genius had become the stock-in-trade of every publishing house bent upon disposing of gold bricks or counterfeit coin.

None the less, and throughout this period of realistic ballyhoo, a number of realists have come and gone, with or without acclaim: Upton Sinclair: "The Jungle," "Love's Pilgrimage"; Harris Merton Lyon: "Sardonic," "Graphics"; Neil Boyce: "Proud Lady"; Stephen French Whitman: "Predestined"; Robert Steel: "One Man"; Louis Joseph Vance: "Joan Thursday"; Sherwood Anderson: "Selected Short Stories"; Albert Edwards: "A Man's World"; Willa Cather: "My Antonia"; Evelyn Scott: "The Narrow House"; Konrad Bercowicz: "Crimes of Charity"; Charles Fort: "The Outcast Manufacturers"; Sinclair Lewis: "Main Street"; Homer Croy: "West of the Water Tower"; Floyd Dell: "Moon Calf"; Abraham Cahan: "The Rise of David Levinsky"; John Dos Passos: "Manhattan Transfer"; Samuel Ornitz: "Haunch, Paunch and Jowl"; Ernest Hemingway: "A Farewell to Arms"; Henry K. Marks: "Undertow"; Helen Grace Carlisle: "Mother's Cry"; DuBois Heyward: "Porgy"; William Faulkner: "Sanctuary." Of these, as is generally known, the distinguished or semi-distinguished successes were Sinclair, Cather, Anderson, Lewis, Dell, Dos Passos, Hemingway and Faulkner. The others enjoyed no more than a day's fame before they sank into the dark.

Nevertheless, and to this hour, the great American realistic novel is still expected. Its realization or, at worst, approximate realization, in such instances as "With the Procession," "The Story of Eva," "Quicksand," "One Man," "The Outcast Manufacturers," "The Narrow House," "Joan Thursday," "The Rise of David Levinsky," has failed of recognition. Critic, publisher and anticipatory reader are still on the lookout. But quite uniformly they still neglect these in favor of the utterly false. One need only think of the sales of the works of the first group mentioned, and then ask after the fate of these. In fact, so truly inadequate is the critical sense and taste of the American public that an extremely fine realistic picture, originally published in self-defense by an unconscious literary genius, Jared Flagg ("The Crimes of Jared Flagg"), has been allowed to sink into the limbo of the forgotten, the supposition being that it was a false defense of an immoral and dishonest man.

In the meantime has come and gone one of the most astounding periods in the world's history—the rise, dominance and fall of the industrial system. Giants have appeared. Wars have been fought. Men and women by the millions have been enslaved, sweated, starved, shot. Like religion and kingship in the past, mere chill, brutal money has seated itself on the throne and set up not only its dictatorship but its theory of how man is to live. In the place of the palaces and cathedrals of the past, it has put factories and skyscrapers and exclaimed: "Behold! Respect! This is the world as it is to be!"

In the meantime, too, whatever is brainless, mediocre, and prurient passes muster as realistic literature. This is evidenced by the growing number of neighborhood lending libraries and drug and cigar store book tables, all stocked with the latest fiction pretending not only to reality but to a super-awareness of the smart as well as the more pornographic shades of our American life. These books are clever, of course. Their psychology is not wholly bad, although it is mainly parlor or tea-time psychology. The action is not slow, but the opposite. But of real conditions, real emotions, real people, real drama, real tragedy, not a line. And they are bought almost entirely by unreal people, people with notions built upon how they would like to be, not upon what they really are.

SECOND THOUGHTS

by EUGENE O'NEILL

What would I change in past productions of my plays if I could live through them again? Many things. In some plays, considerable revision of the writing of some of the scenes would strike me as imperative. Other plays—"The First Man," "Gold," "Welded," "The Fountain"—I would dismiss as being too painfully bungled in their present form to be worth producing at all.

But one thing I most certainly would not change: the use of masks in "The Hairy Ape," in my arrangement of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," in "All God's Chillun Got Wings" (the symbol of the African primitive mask in the last part of the play, which, in the production in Russian by the Moscow Kamerny Theatre I saw in Paris, is dramatically intensified and emphasized), in "The Great God Brown" and, finally, in "Lazarus Laughed," in which all the characters except Lazarus remain masked throughout the play. I regard this use of masks as having been uniformly successful.

The change I would make would be to call for more masks in some of these productions and to use them in other productions where they were not used before. In "The Emperor Jones," for example. All the figures in Jones' flight through the forest should be masked. Masks would dramatically stress their phantasmal quality, as contrasted with the unmasked Jones, intensify the supernatural menace of the tom-tom, give the play a more complete and vivid expression. In "The Hairy Ape" a much more extensive use of masks would be of the greatest value in emphasizing the theme of the play. From the opening of the fourth scene, where Yank begins to think, he enters into a masked world; even the familiar faces of his mates in the forecabin have become strange and alien. They should be masked, and the faces of everyone he encounters thereafter, including the symbolic gorilla's.

In "All God's Chillun Got Wings," all save the seven leading characters should be masked; for all the secondary figures are part and parcel of the expressionistic background of the play, a world at first indifferent, then cruelly hostile, against which the tragedy of Jim Harris is outlined. In "The Great God Brown" I would now make the masks symbolize more definitely the abstract theme of the play instead of, as in the old production, stressing the more superficial meaning that people wear masks before other people and are mistaken by them for their masks.

In "Marco Millions" all the people of the East should be masked—Kublai, the Princess Kokachin, all of them! For anyone who has been in the East, or who has read Eastern philosophy, the reason for this is obvious. It is an exact dramatic expression of West confronted by East. Moreover, it is the only possible way to project this contrast truthfully in the theatre, for Western actors cannot convey Eastern character realistically, and their only chance to suggest it convincingly is with the help of masks.

As for "Strange Interlude," that is an attempt at the new masked psychological drama which I have discussed before, without masks—a successful attempt, perhaps, in so far as it concerns only surfaces and their immediate sub-surfaces, but not where, occasionally, it tries to probe deeper.

With "Mourning Becomes Electra," masks were called for in one draft of the three plays. But the Classical connotation was too insistent. Masks in that connection demand great language to speak—which let me out of it with a sickening bump! So I had to discard them. There was a realistic New England insistence in my mind, too, which would have barred great language even in a dramatist capable of writing it, an insistence on the clogged and clogged and inarticulate. So it evolved ultimately into the "mask-like faces," which expressed my intention tempered by the circumstances. However, I should like to see "Mourning Becomes Electra" done entirely with masks, now that I can view it solely as a psychological play, quite removed from the confusing preoccupations the Classical derivation of its plot once caused me. Masks would emphasize the drama of the life and death impulses that drive the characters on to their fates and put more in its proper secondary place, as a frame the story of the New England family.

THE GERSHWIN MYTH

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 3)

Transparent anachronisms prevail throughout. There is no such thing as a characteristically Gershwinian orchestration; no repetitive idiosyncracies, such as are found in all composers of stature, no recognizable habits. (Fritz Reiner, an admirer of the "Rhapsody in Blue," once said to me that he wished someone would tell Gershwin to have a competent composer entirely reorchestrate it and remove its instrumental clumsiness and self-consciousness.) Themes, no matter how good, are stated, naively, *forte*, *piano*; fast, slow; the closing sections (except in the "Concerto") are mainly but palpable and inept restatements, bald, and without a trace of balance or inevitability.

It is only too evident that Gershwin's entire march to fame has been conducted on a piecework basis. The "Rhapsody in Blue" required the services of Grofé. In a controversy with Walter Kramer, Gershwin published a facsimile page of score to prove that he orchestrated the "Concerto" himself. How proof is thus established remains a moot question. As for "An American in Paris," the genial Daly was constantly in rehearsal attendance, both as repetiteur and adviser, and any member of the orchestra could testify that he knew far more about the score than Gershwin. The point is that no previous claimant of honors in symphonic composition has ever presented so much argument and controversy as to whether his work was his own or not.

PARIS OR NEW YORK?

by PAUL MORAND

What is lacking in Paris to make it a Garden of Eden? What does New York need to be a Paradise? Why, when in Paris, does one regret New York, and when in New York, sigh for Paris? Man is so constituted that wherever chance may place him, he wants to be elsewhere. But, part from such metaphysical reasons—a person so perfect as to be completely happy anywhere would be such a monster that I prefer not to think of him—would the problem not be solved if New York were in France and Paris in America? For the moment that is impossible, the privilege of ubiquity being exclusively reserved to the devil, but the day is approaching when the two cities will be within a few minutes of each other by stratosphere, so that, after lunching at the Colony, one can dine at Larue's. While awaiting that redoubtable day, let me try to define what is lacking in Paris to make one completely happy.

Most of all, Paris lacks the air of New York, that air which sometimes comes in from the sea, sweeping away with its Atlantic salt all the impurities of those magnificent and terrible cancers known as modern capitals, and which sometimes blows from the West, that cold air which recharges those lofty accumulators, the skyscrapers of Manhattan. Paris has a stuffy smell, like fresh buttered onions, like a concierge's *loge*. Paris lacks vivid Winters, blue skies, Indian Summers, when the pink shafts of the skyscrapers rise like young men blushing for their virility. In Winter Paris is soaked in a lukewarm, diluted mud which makes me miss the open-air skating-rinks, the snow in Central Park, the rosy cheeks, above their furs, of the girls on Fifth Avenue.

For me Paris lacks orchestras that can play in time, prima donnas who sing in key, automatic bars, clean railway stations, creamed oysters, picturesque gangsters, polite taxi drivers, and politeness in general. Paris has no dirt track races, no good coffee or bread, no chain stores, no telephone operators who answer, no well-kept offices; its theatre seats cannot be reached so quickly; it has no squeakless doors. Paris lacks that complete silence in the midst of the loudest noise which I like so much in my New York hotel room. But, above all, Paris is wanting in poetry and kindness. Hardened by centuries of psychological introspection, starved by ratiocinating reason, withered by a perfect technique of pleasure, Paris has only the poetry of her stones, her squares, her bridges, with which to feed sentimental romances. It lacks the great poetry of living things, of vague and pathetic chance, of famine and pestilence, of the gigantic loves that are the fruits of nature, the burning savor of Good and Evil. Paris is obliged to import from abroad her loveliest suicides, her most astounding crimes, her most sublime fools. Paris is civilized man; Paris is style. God visits innocent cities, like London, New York, Moscow, Lima, but He is afraid of Paris. God detests style, because style is the man.

Now, let me see what New York lacks. Everyone agrees on the first count. New York has no spare time; it lacks café terraces, the best symbol of our European leisure. It also lacks an intelligent measure of time, the art of giving everything just exactly the amount of time it is worth. In New York, marriages are too short and novels are too long. There is certainly no lack of alcohol in New York, but there is no delightful place in which to drink it. The journeys and interior landscapes of drunkenness are not equal to a pretty arbor in the Bois de Boulogne where one can dine in the open on a Summer night. It also lacks trees and their round shadows on the pavement, lavatories, green suburbs, hoary old palaces, grass, ghosts, the art of being weak, lazy idleness, long lunches, conversation.

New York does not know how to concentrate, to renounce, or to choose. If Paris is wrong to say "No" to everything, New York exasperates me by its facility in saying "Yes." New York lacks the Seine, which flows along past books and glides between two parapets of classics and human experience. New York also needs the infinitely small and the infinitely varied; it has only the infinitely large, "the greatest in the world." "One often needs something smaller than oneself," says a French proverb. In New York the people one needs are Otto Kahns, Hearsts or Primo Carneras. New York is lacking in pigeons, priests, bordellos, carnivals, *cabinets particuliers*, horses, white wine, bells, tears. I may add that this capital of modern poetry still awaits its poet. Whitman is too far removed; Dos Passos is too near. So far as I am concerned, New York needs New Yorkers who die in the houses where they were born. And finally: there are not enough cats in New York.

ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS SERIES

No. 2

C. E. M. Joad, in "Under the Fifth Rib": "I think Purcell the greatest Englishman who ever lived. I would give all the plays of Shakespeare for Purcell's music to 'The Fairy Queen'."

I do not choose to write for "The American Spectator." Calvin Coolidge.—Advt.

SERVANTS OF GOD

No. 2

Blackpool, England.—The Rev. Harold Davidson, Rector of Stiffkey, fell afoul of the law again today. The police charged him with "aiding and abetting the obstruction of a footpath" by sitting in a barrel at a country fair on exhibition at three cents a look. Recently the Rev. Mr. Davidson was convicted of immorality by a church tribunal. His adventure in the barrel, he said, was a means of obtaining funds for an appeal.

PROSE OF A PALLBEARER

by BRANCH CABELL

It is my foible, one among many, to be a devotee of the niceties, of the overtones and of the precisions of very often rewritten and suitably colored prose. I believe it well for an author to make sport with rhetorical devices, to play with vowel sounds and scansion, to build refrains, to dispose his cadences, to contrast the length of his clauses, to turn amorously to a run of liquids—to carve, as it were, his verbal cherry-stones under a magnifying glass of repeated re-inspection,—and to practise by the score yet other allied legerdemains: all quite seriously. It is but a series of microscopic parlor games, perhaps; but it will entertain him. It will lull him into the pleasure-giving illusion that the writing of prose may be an art—terse, magical, complex, fiery-hearted and gaudy, at need, with the naïveté of a June sunset—an art wherein, by-and-by, toward his later nineties, he may attain competence.

Such is my foible, or, if you so prefer, my creed. And on account of it, my main objection to all our current authors (as well as to their predecessors in this great republic) is that they do not try to write prose commensurate with the resources of the English language; nor do they harbor, to all appearances, the belief that prose requires any special "writing." Prose, as an art, does not really exist to the consciousness of our literati. It is an art in which no American has yet excelled; and as fondly to-day as aforesaid, our best-thought-of writers have been abetting in their clumsy and drab delinquencies by our best-thought-of reviewers.

Yet in the main, you may observe, reviewers do not much bother about style. At most, they will comment, in passing, on the excellent prose style of some author who has none. It is what the writer "has to say" which counts: and provided that what he says is "significant" or "vital" or "daring" or "of grave importance"—and, in short, is "timely"—then his book has the needed essentials, for everything except, of course, permanence.

For under the touch of time the "timely" proves always to be ephemeral. Twice, in preparing prefaces for the re-issue of a book I had written some while earlier, I have had occasion to explore the back files of the *Publisher's Weekly*: and (barring, to be sure, one's own books) I can think of no more dreadful, and yet salutary, reading for anybody who "writes." One by one they took form again, the just cloudily remembered actual great of yesterday. Here were Brander Matthews, John Fox, Winston Churchill, Gene Stratton Porter, Henry Van Dyke, Thomas Dixon, Mary E. Wilkins, Mary Johnston, Mary MacLane, Hergesheimer, Cabell and Harold Bell Wright, Upton Sinclair, Booth Tarkington, Henry Sydnor Harrison, David Graham Phillips, Richard Harding Davis and Meredith E. Nicholson: one had plain proof here that all these semi-fabulous persons once did actually exist.

Since each was American-born, they reached not ever to the magnitude of Hall Caine, or of Mrs. Humphry Ward, or of Michael Arlen, in the eyes of Americans, one noticed: but, even so, they had all been gravely received, at this time or the other time, as ponderable figures in our literature; and their publishers' advertising matter quoted, from the reviewers of that far-off day, encomia and prophesies which now appeared as unbalanced and incredible and droll and dusty (and yet pathetic, too) as does the Gettysburg Address or the Apostles' Creed.

Each one of these writers, I inferred from their grim relics, was a "timely" figure. Each in his or her little hour, no doubt, wrote as to some topic or another topic in which the book-buyers of that transient hour happened to be interested. So each was heard (I meditated) because of his or her "timely" theme; each was hymned by the reviewers and by the women's clubs and by the advertisements now forever ensepulchered in the back files of the *Publisher's Weekly*; and each by-and-by was to all practical intents forgotten, when the reading public turned what might without uncouth exaggeration be called its mind to yet other topics.

I became quite sentimental over the back files of the *Publisher's Weekly*. Who now remembers just what questions of the day these mighty dead discoursed or viewed with alarm? All these, it is plain, enchanted the judicious briefly: but with what unrecoverable contraptions, what ancient runes? Spoke they of race suicide or of votes for women, of white slavery or of the white man's burden, or of that imperilled younger generation which rode on bicycles? What songs, in brief, did these shadowy Sirens sing? and what good name had each hero, when he lived, among club women, fondly admired upon rostra, between the Madam Chairman and an ice-water pitcher? Very few persons know nowadays, and quite certainly, nobody living cares. When Mizraim is become mummy he is at worst assured of a hospitable reception in one or another museum; but for the discredited prince of literature there is no asylum save the pulping-mill.

Each one of these once popular writers, I suspect, was tainted with moral earnestness. Sincerity—"that youthful virtue," as Samuel Butler has called it—is an ill which few Americans escape in private life; and yet, incalculably, does our race demand also in its better-thought-of reading-matter that tutorial sort of dullness which voices the most subtle emotions and the most profound thoughts of morons. The fact is sad; it seems inexplicable: but it remains undeniable. So each of these aforementioned popular writers, I have no doubt, gravely addressed himself to grave problems, and had, as the phrase runs, "something to say." Each said (I imagine) his

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 2)

ARNOLD BENNETT

by JIM TULLY

We had exchanged several letters in London. He wrote warmly of any work which had appeared in *Vanity Fair*, but made no mention of my books. My interview with him was set eight days in advance. On the scheduled day I received a letter from him saying that he only talked for the annoyance of his friends. He thus placed me on my honor not to quote him.

His sales in the United States had made him wealthy. His contempt for much in America was well known. His American publishers were also mine. Wondering who had warned him against me, I smiled and kept the appointment.

He lived in a grimy four-story building which overlooked Cadogan Square. All the roofs in his neighborhood were fringed with chimney pots. A small stretch of lawn was at the rear of his house.

A manservant led me through a hall to a staircase. The hall was crowded with the possessions of a man of exquisite taste.

I entered a panelled Georgian room with a parquet floor. Bowls of flowers were all about. A rich green was used in the furnishings. Fine paintings were in profusion.

The door of the room opened suddenly. Arnold Bennett stood at attention. His movement had been that of an immense mannequin. His hand went to his forehead in a kind of salute. He stood against the wall for a moment. I introduced the lady with me. He bowed stiffly; then turned from her and greeted me even more stiffly.

He was as wide as Rodin's statue of Balzac. Not exactly fat, his round, heavy-set figure was expansive. His hair, gray and thick, stood, hedgehoglike, from the top of his head. His eyes were vivid and sad. His mouth was large, his lips thick, his teeth far above the average size. Through his florid face ran tiny purple streaks. With a hand, heavy as a peasant's, he felt often his close-cropped mustache. He held his head backward. I divided my attention between his mouth and his eyes. His mouth was generous, coarse and sensual, the mouth of a man whose passions would not be too fastidious.

He wore a checkered suit, a red necktie, and a salmon colored silk shirt.

Younger English writers had affectionately called him A. B. I wanted very much to like him.

He had a hesitation in his speech. In the middle of a sentence he would throw his head back, close his eyes, and open his cavernous mouth. All would become silent. Finally the most important word in the sentence would come like the crack of a whip.

H. G. Wells told me that Bennett could have corrected the impediment in his speech had he so desired.

The sentence completed, Bennett would immediately assume the attitude of a man in a room with a tiger that might at any moment mutilate his many paintings and destroy his bric-a-brac. His aloofness made me doubt his capacity for catching the feelings of others. His breeding was not sufficient to enable him to meet me on common ground.

I recalled to myself that he had somewhere written, "People have said to me: 'But you are so critical. You condemn everything.' Such is the complaint of the laity against the initiate, against the person who has diligently practised the cultivation of his taste. And, roughly speaking, it is a well-founded and excusable complaint. A person of fine taste does condemn nearly everything."

I tried to fit his words with his appearance while he talked to the lady with me. Wrinkles of interest came to the edges of his complacent eyes, while I gazed at a painting of two bitter old curmudgeons huddled in a cab.

It was a picture taken out of nature. A brutal, cunning old man sat hunched in the seat, his tenacious hands clasped. His lips were puckered as though a thorn were in his throat. Wrinkles ran between his eyes and down his withered neck. Near him was a senile, abject woman.

"I like that picture," I volunteered.

Bennett's stiff body loosened.

"That's my treasure," he said. His guard went up again. He looked about the room as if to make sure that no object was missing.

The lady with me sat, a cigarette in her hand, her dress to her knees. The eyes of the great writer discovered her leg. They did not move for some time.

A child could be heard wailing.

"Have you children?" he asked the lady.

"No," she answered.

"They're a nuisance," he said.

"And your ambition?" he asked her.

"To be a writer."

The successful novelist shrugged his shoulders. "Two writers in one house—good God!" A frown went over his heavy face. His head tilted back, his mouth went open, his eyes closed.

Dreading the long pause, I asked, "Are you coming to America soon, Mr. Bennett?"

"Not soon, if ever," he half choked. "Club women drinking tea!" he hesitated again. "My God!"

His eyes opened in painful memory. The purple streaks widened in his face.

He rose and poured tea. His hand fumbled with the silver sugar tongs.

I refused the yellow concoction.

He had told me in a letter that he owned the best Bourbon in London.

"Will you have something else?" he asked.

"Yes—Bourbon."

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 1)

The Editors opine that Ecuador, Afghanistan, Russia and Chicago should be invited to join the League of Nations.

ARNOLD BENNETT

(Continued from Page 2, Col. 5)

He pressed a button. A servant entered. I filled a glass and said, "No chaser," to the flunkey.

In consternation, master and servant looked at each other.

"You were right, Mr. Bennett, that's good stuff." Without hesitation, he asked, "Will you have another?" I held out my glass.

"It's too bad there's prohibition in America," he said.

"I haven't noticed it."

He looked at me, not unkindly. His thick lips curved in a smile.

"Is the life of Henry the Eighth still selling well over there?" he asked, almost with banter.

"Oh yes," I answered, "We're all bigamists at heart—Henry's our hero."

He shook his head at the riddle of our benighted nation. The talk drifted to American writers.

He was none too fond of Dreiser, but admired greatly the work of Sinclair Lewis.

"He doesn't carry as much water as Dreiser," He got my meaning. His head again went back. His mouth opened. He said nothing.

He admired Douglas Fairbanks "A ham actor who can jump," was my comment. He returned to his idol three times.

"He can still jump," I agreed.

He made it final with, "An unusual fellow."

We came to Hemingway. "I have read him in French," he said triumphantly.

George Bernard Shaw's name was mentioned. "He is our circus," he said.

"More than that," I put in.

"Oh yes, far more." I felt that he was fond of Shaw.

Talk drifted to a young English writer who had so devotedly called Bennett A. B. "He will never arrive at his destination," said Bennett. His head went back. There was fully a minute's pause between stutters, then he finished, "He is just a fool—an intellectual fool." The description was deadly accurate. The man from the Five Towns knew how to read a fool.

"There are many of them in America," I said.

His head tilted back, his mouth opened for an endless half minute, and he said, "I have met them," his head went further back, "all." He finished with a mighty effort.

His interest in American prisons recalled his humble beginnings. As I talked of life's stragglers, I had, for a few minutes, the great author of "The Old Wives' Tale" for a listener. Gone was the snob and the libertine. In his place was all that will make Arnold Bennett immortal—his pity for the defeated and the despised.

The lady moved in her chair. Arnold Bennett took another glance at her silk clad leg. In just such a way a woman might have broken in upon the Last Supper.

He asked me which English writer had impressed me most. I answered, "Thomas Hardy." His eyes opened a trifle wider. Hardy had but recently died. "His books are now selling well in America," I said. Bennett's head went further back. He opened his mouth and stammered for a full minute, then said bluntly, "His death helped him."

The lady with me tapped the end of a cigarette. The great man struck a match, rose stiffly, and leaned over the lady.

Vermore would have enjoyed the picture—the delicate face of the girl, puffing the cigarette, while the light from the match in the London dusk accentuated the strong florid features of the great writer who had risen from despair.

He had started in London as a clerk at twenty-five shillings a week. A fourth of that amount went for a small bed-room. In ten years he rode the waves of success. If he wore that success like a traveling salesman, it must be remembered that there was much insular mud in his make-up.

His undershot jaw was proof that the futility of all things human concerned him not at all. A heavy mouth with a good brain, he flew to every social occasion.

Sure of himself always among his inferiors, he could still be surprised when Henry James treated him as an equal.

His taste was more feminine than masculine. If he soared a few times like an eagle, it was the tail of the peacock that pulled him down.

He wrote of himself and his possessions in the manner of a Cockney with his first new suit of clothes.

That he was one of the lords of literature in London chiefly for the lack of bigger and braver men, he was evidently not aware. He had long ago honestly admitted that he took up writing to earn a living. He had written nearly a quarter of a million words in a year—a tremendous output, even for a man built like a heavyweight bruiser.

Well, this brave fellow, whose innocent self-confessed foible was never to be at a loss, and who was a complete guide to art and life, was afraid to let himself be quoted by an American hobo.

His wife returned as we were leaving. Much younger than Bennett, vivacious and effervescent, she uttered the usual polite banalities. She was deeply sorry not to have been able to seize on the great opportunity of meeting me. . . . She only had had eight days in which to prepare.

I glanced at Bennett.

The most famous citizen of Five Towns was more like blubber and mannequin now. Swiftly and apologetically he had aged. The stiffness had gone from the social lion's tail. His lips moved in never to be heard whispers.

As one walks out of a room of death, I moved toward the door.

DRAMATIC VALUES

Par \$3.00

"Dinner at Eight" (G. S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber)—45c

"Nona" (Gladys Unger)—1c, in Confederate money.

Abbey Theatre Repertoire Company (O'Casey, Robinson, et al.)—\$5.00

"Rendezvous" (Barton MacLane)—15c

"Success Story" (John Howard Lawson)—30c

"The Good Earth" (as dramatized by Owen and Donald Davis)—25c

"I Loved You Wednesday" (Molly Ricardel and William Du Bois)—\$1.10

"Men Must Fight" (Reginald Lawrence and S. K. Lauren)—20c

"Criminal at Large" (Edgar Wallace)—1c, in Roumanian stamps.

"Mademoiselle" (Jacques Deval)—\$1.00

"The Anatomist" (James Bridie)—10c

"Dangerous Corner" (J. B. Priestley)—\$2.00

"The Surgeon" (Anthony Young)—00c

"The Late Christopher Bean" (Fauchois and Howard)—75c

"Autumn Crocus" (C. L. Anthony)—10c

The Editors are convinced that if only our ten or twelve million unemployed, who will be forced to sleep on benches in parks, or in the woods or fields, this winter, are allowed to sleep there, and if the various houses, hotels and apartments now vacant are kept tightly closed, and if the millions of unused bushels of wheat and coffee now held in barns and grain elevators are kept in said barns and grain elevators, and if the men in the coffee and bread lines are kept in the coffee and bread lines, the perfect working of the law of supply and demand will have been demonstrated, and the future of the rest of the world, as well as of democracy and plutocracy, assured.

REQUIRED READING

"The Age of Reason has faded back into its twilight; it was a dawn that had no day,"—Editorial in *The Bookman*.

Required Reading: Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, Descartes, Voltaire, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Kant, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Huxley, Darwin, Haeckel, Newton, Spencer, Mill, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Bacon, Renan, Strauss, Havelock Ellis.

"Branch Cabell, believe it or not, has an essay on 'The Genteel Tradition in Sex' in which he complains once more of his lubricious admirers,"—Editorial in *The New Republic*.

Required Reading: *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 6, p. 483. The Clarendon Press 1908.

THE FOUR MARXIAN BROTHERS

Edmund ("Groucho") Wilson
Kenneth ("Zeppo") Burke
John ("Chico") Dos Passos
Malcolm ("Harpo") Cowley

PROSE OF A PALLBEARER

(Continued from Page 2, Col. 4)

little something about "timely" matters, and duly heard his grave and apropos saying applauded; and then of course, so soon as the especial problem concerned was settled or let slide, his saying became unrelated to reality. Each commented (I daresay) upon conditions which no longer exist; and to the intrepid explorer of their time-yellowed pages it must now seem as though these writers were talking gravely about dragons as social perils or were at pains to expose the hypocrisy of the unicorn.

I do not, I confess, know what these once "timely" persons did write about. I have not the hardihood to be myself that aforementioned explorer. For I find that I instinctively (or, at the last pinch, with plain panic terror) avoid the writer who has "something to say." He always says it so raucously, and his saying is always so very, very familiar. His admirers, happy in that their enthusiasms are not restricted by any rudiments of education, I leave free to marvel over their idol's originality: but I leave too the latter half of his book unread. I prefer other trivia, because of that foible to which I confessed at outset.

I prefer Thackeray elegiac over the fact that all dolls are stuffed with sawdust; I prefer Sir Thomas Browne's amplification of one single truism, that Queen Anne is dead, into the gorgeous last chapter of "Urn Burial"; and I very much prefer Pater's rhapsody over La Gioconda, wherein the pomps of language triumph decisively over the absence of any particular meaning. It is my avocation to delight in the so curiously unappreciated prose of Shakespeare and the prose of Congreve, of De Quincey and of Stevenson, of Swinburne (howsoever indefensible I may here feel to be my pleasure), of Arthur Machen and of Lord Dunsany and of Max Beerbohm, and of yet many other un-American writers who have noticed that human language is an instrument far more impressive than is the human intelligence, and so have ambitiously devoted themselves to the nobler medium. I prefer, in brief, a writer who knows how to write, on the same principle that I prefer a cook who knows how to cook, or a chauffeur who can drive a car; and I await with considerable impatience the time when just one American, somewhere, may learn how to write with competence.

A LOST ART

by ERNEST BOYD

The art of adultery is slowly being destroyed in the United States. In due course it will be but a vague memory, like that of good wines and rallow spirits. Easy divorce laws and psycho-analysis are combining to drive out of American life this vital element, which has overturned empires, built up great civilizations, and proved the inspiration of warriors, poets and musicians. The very base of domestic life is threatened, for, while divorces increase, adultery is more and more infrequently mentioned as the cause. Only ten per cent of 164,609 divorces, according to the latest available statistics, were granted on the grounds of adultery. The figures of the Census Bureau bear witness to this alarming fact, and also to the prevailing frivolity of the reasons for dissolving marriages which could assuredly have endured in an earlier and happier and wiser age.

The instinct which prompts conservative European countries to make divorce either impossible or very difficult is a sound one, although the reasons adduced may often be defective. Facilities for divorce are not, as some Europeans imagine, a menace to marriage as an institution, but they are a menace to marriage as a practical device, for they put a premium upon failure. The more marriage is respected as a fetish, the less workable does it become in practice. Americans assuredly are more obsessed by the abstraction of marital happiness than any other nation, but for the human institution, makeshift as all things human are, they have an almost childish contempt. They see in marriage licenses some impossible promise of happiness, and renew them with ingenuous faith. It is very much as if the holder of an automobile license were to expect that the state should teach him how to drive, and to guarantee the condition of the car.

The victims of the matrimonial juggernaut in America are an interesting study. Couples so situated as to be beyond the reach of social ostracism display an eagerness to legalize their situation worthy of a provincial church warden in the Irish Free State. Day after day front page stories in the newspapers carry into respectable circles the domestic infelicities and squabbles of people who clearly mistook the contact of two epidermises for the consummation of some great sacrament. The very desire to be proper involves the victims in public rumors and scandals, thereby defeating their ambition to appear respectable. Thus they pay the penalty for neglecting the art of adultery.

The wild, irresistible rush for respectability has become so accepted a part of modern life, that all the fine graces and pleasantly devious ways of intrigue are forgotten. No longer are irate husbands kept waiting outside while some gallant hides in the traditional cupboard, or clambers down the fire-escape. The paramour has at her elbow a telephone and has sold the serial rights of her adventure before it has well begun. The City Hall or an obliging clergyman will justify any escapade. George Sand set a deplorable precedent when she wrote "Elle et Lui," but at least she had the good taste not to marry Alfred de Musset. How much more gracefully Chopin came out of that affair, in a manner befitting his position as a musician and a gentleman. The irresponsibilities of marriage were at that time better understood; they were rarely confounded with the responsibilities of love.

While Europeans from afar off debate the question of divorce in terms of its threat to the home, few Americans pause to consider the actual ravages which marriage has caused, thanks to the assistance of divorce. Matrimony is never so secure an institution as in the countries where its dissolution is easy. Divorce has had the same effect upon the matrimonial habits as Prohibition has had upon the drinking habits of the American people. Where people took one or two cocktails before dinner they now take ten, and the man who once would have hesitated at his first marriage now plunges cheerfully into his sixth. Even men about town have been heard to confess, in despair, that they always marry the girl; it is so much cheaper, in the end, to pay alimony.

In America marriage is rendered ridiculous and undignified by the very people who apparently reject the belief in an indissoluble union but believe in marriage for marriage's sake. The declining birth rate and the sterility of most of these partnerships indicate that concern for the innocent children is not an excuse for this misapplied zeal. Marriages take place in the same way as dry legislators get drunk. There is no respect whatsoever for the principle at stake, but merely illogical, anti-social and selfish indulgence in weaknesses which the civilized world has been able to cope with more urbanely ever since the beginning of history.

The ideal of Service, or rather, the Community Spirit, may possibly be invoked to explain this, as it explains so many other national eccentricities. People marry repeatedly in order to set a good example to the lower orders and, above all, to teach the degraded alien to respect the women and customs of this great republic. In their turn, Americans who are not "of the better sort" have to prove their stalwart Americanism by an excessive readiness to acquiesce. They acquire an enthusiasm for American ideals comparable to the anti-Semitism of an Episcopalian Jew. Thus, no sooner does Don Luis Gonzalez feel within himself a penchant for some fair creature who shares his labors in Hollywood than he determines to drag a pastor into the affair. Before that laudable end has been attained, his pajamas have been shown in the rotogravure supplements and the modesties of his family life uncovered to the gaze of countless movie fans. In his own backward land only the stars and the moon-

light above Popocatepetl would have witnessed his infidelity.

Thus the adventure of living is sadly diminished for the loyal American. Social life, at least, is reduced to a humdrum cycle of divorces, with or without newspaper scandal. The *garçonnière* is but the ante-room of the nuptial chamber, and the red roses that once were a prelude to agreeable sin are now soon mellowed to the tranquil shade of orange blossoms. It has paid the divorce lawmakers to advertise marriage. They have sold the idea to the American public, and sales resistance has been broken down by discrediting the brighter aspects of adultery. The essence of salesmanship is to persuade people to discard what they have for something they do not want. You may have a perfectly good marriage license. The question is: Does it satisfy? Are you getting out of your investment all that you expected? If not, there is an opportunity to better yourself, to become a \$25,000 a year man . . . meaning, of course, in terms of alimony.

Only the "psychology" of salesmanship can explain the phenomenon of recurring marriage, the eternal domestic return. When the state of matrimony is no longer regarded as holy, when at least the skeptical acquiescence of the worldly wise in its alleged indissolubility is abandoned, what follows? The concept of marriage as a religious and social contract covers the multitude of things which married life fosters and preserves. The one thing it does not guarantee is the prolongation of the raptures and illusions of early passionate love. Yet, that is apparently the one thing which the practitioners of American marriage pursue ingenuously from one divorce court to another. They are dissatisfied with married life the moment it approximates to reality. The morning a wife no longer looks as blooming as the day of their first meeting, the husband recalls the charms of his stenographer. When he is first seen in the yellow light of dawn no longer the superb creature of her dreams, the wife remembers the handsome fellow who asked for her telephone number when they were dancing at El Patio or the Montparnasse.

If this is not, at bottom, the process which keeps the divorce mills grinding, how can one account for the superstition that there can be any essential difference between a first marriage and a third, a second and a sixth? Apart from certain notorious and universally accepted causes of separation, such as insanity, the reasons for exchanging one home for another are, when not material, illusory. Psycho-analysis reassures its dupes in vain, when it tells them of frustrations and the rest. The malady, if any, is so simple that a holiday or a discreet retreat to Cythera will preserve the home intact. Even an evening's serious drinking with congenial men will rest the troubled soul, without the necessity for putting asunder those whom God, or His modern equivalent, hath joined. Nature has wisely provided escapes not dreamed of in the current simplifications of life by means of more and better divorce.

It is here, however, that the lamentable aspect of the problem comes uppermost. It is here that we come upon the horrible consequence of the obsolescence of adultery. The retreats so cunningly devised by civilized society and perfected through many centuries are being cut off. With a little divorce in every home as the aim of the marriage salesmen, the amenities of polite society not only disappear, but the very conveniences of city life are sacrificed. An unprotected man is no longer safe. Should he observe a lady of friendly mien at 3:30 A.M. on Broadway and conclude rightly, from her behavior, that she wishes to join him in his car, he may find himself before a magistrate. The latter will not ask the lady why she was abroad so late or why so sociable, if her intentions were pure. He will fine the depraved male and warn him not to presume upon the innocence of an American girl.

The technique of adultery and all its concomitant practises are fading into the realm of legend. Few hotel-keepers now understand their duties in this connection, and landlords are no longer what they were. One cannot patronize one's neighborhood apartment house, and the tactics of the encounter are spoiled by the inefficiency of the parties concerned. It would be inexpedient, therefore, to start a drive, to emulate the methods of the slogan-makers, to institute a National Adultery Week. Perhaps that is just as well. Such methods are ill-adapted to the object in view, which is to preserve and popularize an ancient and charming custom, evolved long before the strident noise of modern life made privacy impossible.

Adultery cannot be restored to its former dignity and high estate by the vulgar means of publicity campaigns. Let us leave publicity to the devotees of divorce, who have sole right to the claim that they brought advertising into amour. Adultery is an integral part of an older and finer social order; it belongs to the time when a glance, the movement of a fan, or a touch of fingers meant more than all the gin and petting with which semi-nude moderns summon up courage to call once more upon their illusions and marry again. It is essentially an aristocratic art and still flourishes only in countries where the ideals of high-caste men and women dominate social life. It is incompatible with democracy and Fundamentalism or any of the deadly virtues under which America suffers to-day. Against none of these, strange to say, has there been less evidence of revolt than against that which has taken from indissoluble marriage its *raison d'être* and left us to the dreary disillusionment of multiple matrimony.

The Editors surmise that if the English had resorted to forcible feeding of Gandhi, with English cooking, he would have died of indigestion.

NOVEL VERSUS DRAMA

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

One of the apparently unavoidable weaknesses of drama is the arbitrary imposition upon it of devices, thoroughly tedious, that the novel is able to make short shrift of. The irksome quality of so much of drama is due to internal demands that its form cannot escape. In a novel the author is confronted, let us say, with the necessity of introducing to one another a number of characters who are meeting for the first time at a reception, dinner or something of the kind. With the single phrase, "after the dull prefatory amenities were over," he is able to get down to business; there is no need for him further to waste time and space, no need for him to enervate his readers with unimportant and useless detail. But the dramatist, facing a like situation, must inevitably, because of the awkwardness of the peopled stage, dissipate time and fray the interest of his audience with a lot of empty dialogue. . . . runs about as follows:

"How do you do, Mrs. Jones. You know Mrs. Smith, I believe?"

"Of course. So pleased to meet you again, Mrs. Smith. Mrs. Smith, may I present my sister and my brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Brown—Mr. and Mrs. Smith."

"I'm pleased to meet you."

"Thank you, and I'm pleased to meet you."

"Hello there, glad to know you, Brown!"

"How are you?"

"Why here's Bobby!"

"How are you? Hello, Mollie, how are you?"

"Bobby, you know Mr. and Mrs. Jones and Mr. and Mrs. Smith, don't you? Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, this is Bobby—Mr. Robinson."

"I'm very glad to know you."

"How are you, Bobby?"

"Fine, thanks. Hello, Ed."

"You've met my husband, haven't you, Mrs. Jones?"

"Yes, indeed; it's delightful to see you again."

"So glad to see you. You and Mrs. Robinson know each other, don't you?"

"Hello, Hattie. And oh, Lucy!"

"Lucy, Mrs. Jones, this is Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Brown—Mrs. Jones, Mr. Jones, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Robinson."

"I don't believe you've met Mr. Clark, Mrs. Robinson." And so on . . .

The reader, suspicious of critical facetiousness, will doubtless put down the above as an exaggeration, designed for easy comical effect. Any skillful playwright, he will believe, would be able easily to avoid such tiresome and unnecessary routine. Yet the dialogue that I have quoted, save for the Smith, Jones and Brown nomenclature, follows very closely the dialogue in a current stage success written by two of our most adept theatrical writers.

Another shortcoming of the drama lies in its necessity to do something with and about characters who, though present on the stage, are for the moment unessential to its direct and immediate purpose. That is, characters who up to the moment have been concerned in the action but who, upon the entrance of another character and a colloquy between that character and still another, must temporarily be manoeuvred to one side of the platform until they are again needed. In the novel such characters may be forgotten by the author; he need not concern himself with them until it is necessary again to bring them into focus. But in the drama, inasmuch as they remain right there in plain view upon the stage, the playwright must arbitrarily do something about them, however unnecessary to the drama itself they may temporarily be. He must, unless he be of the lazy and incompetent type who trusts everything to the stage director, devise silly, time-killing business for them, must write into his script half-articulate nothings for them to mumble (by way of keeping the picture "lifelike"), and must otherwise strain himself to conceal their perfectly obvious but unnecessary presence. In the novel, as I have observed, they may safely be left in the wings of the reader's imagination.

There is no dramatist, however dexterous and subtle, who does not find the pace of his play often naturally and unavoidably retarded for reasons that, so far as the pace of a novel goes, need never concern the novelist, however lacking in dexterity and subtlety. A novelist writes the line, "Mary got up from her chair, drew the blinds, put out the cat, locked the door, and turned down the lamp." It takes the reader exactly four seconds, by actual count, to read the line, ingest it and get the picture the novelist desires. A dramatist writes exactly the same stage direction in the present tense and by the time the actress playing Mary gets up from her chair, draws the blinds, puts out the cat (even if the beast be on this occasion sufficiently tractable), locks the door and turns down the lamp, at least four minutes have been consumed and the picture the dramatist establishes is no whit more effective, from a dramatic-artistic point of view, than that established by the novelist in four seconds—assuming, in each case, of course, that the episode is not particularly vital to the direct current of the novel or the drama. In almost every drama anywhere from fifteen to twenty-five minutes is thus wasted because of the concreteness of the stage and its personages; nothing is gained by the drama itself; what the novel naturally profits by both in pace and artistry the drama must compulsorily lose. Even the Expressionist drama, which tries to work itself down to a basic skeleton, does not altogether succeed in conserving such wasted time.

The stage has in late years become increasingly conscious of these and other deficiencies of the drama as opposed to the novel and has exercised itself to diminish their degree. In some directions it has succeeded, as witness the device of sudden blackouts and the quick fading of lights to take the place of too slowly falling curtains, the curtailment of elaborate stage directions, and the like. But there

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Avoid brain fatigue. Read "The Modern Thinker."—Advt.

LAUREL LEAVES AND SILVER TRUMPETS

by SEAN O'CASEY

Some time ago, at a gathering held in the Peacock Theatre of Dublin, a sonata in two movements, adagio and allegro, was played on silver trumpets, praising the formation in Ireland of an Academy of belles lettres, Mr. Lennox Robinson playing treble to the bass of Mr. W. B. Yeats. Then all the reporters present rushed off to send the news to the Press that in the midst of the sound of the silver trumpets, a new Academy had been brought into being, alive, and was doing fairly well. A few have been chosen, and a lot have been called to join in membership. In a circular, said to have been sent to those asked to join up, it is stated that this Academy has been formed because Irish authors have, at present, no means whereby they can make their views known; and because of the official censorship in Ireland, which may, at any moment, confine Irish authors to the British and American markets, thereby making it impossible for them to live by distinctive Irish Literature. The circular goes on—it is reported—to say that though the political influence of Irish authorship is small, the authority of its utterance is by no means negligible, for in Ireland there is still a deep respect for intellectual and poetical quality.

"For the last ten years," said Mr. Robinson, speaking at the meeting in the Peacock Theatre, "it has been felt that an Academy has been needed."

But for the last ten years, and for a long time behind them, if not an Academy, a dictatorship in literature, existed, with a power that could blast a mocker, and largely consisted of those who have now formally decided to found a new one. The dictatorship extended over literature into drama, painting, philosophy, music, dancing, religion, economics, ballet, syntax, prosody, poultry keeping, and egg preserving. It remitted and retained sins of expression and sins of style with all the power and fervor of freshly chosen apostles. Anyone who, in Ireland, painted anything more important than a number on a hall-door, or wrote a line more important than a headline for a kid in a school, had to march past, left right, left right, Mr. Yeats or Mr. Russell and a staff of three or four, or seven—which we all know are sacred numbers—before he could number off as an elegant and refined cadet in painting or literature.

It was amazing how they hypnotized people into placidly and reverently accepting their judgments on art and literature. And the oftener their judgments were accepted, the cockier they grew. They saw the beauties on an angel's wing as easily as they saw the beauties on the wing of a bee. A critical word about anything they said was like a flash of lightning thrown into their faces. I remember once in Coole how I picked from a bookshelf a volume called "Stories of Old Ireland and Myself," written by William Orpen, and how, when I was turning the pages, Lady Gregory came in, saw the book, gently took it out of my hand, saying that it "was a poor work and not good reading." Subsequently, rebelling against her gentle but effective censorship, I read the book and found that there was a critical paragraph slating the reputation as a painter held by Mr. Russell, though his work seemed to consist mainly of imitative spreading of paint over a great deal of canvas. There he was, says Orpen, organizing, writing poetry and painting pictures. "He was organizing all the parts of the week in which the fairies left him alone. He painted two pictures every Sunday—one in the morning after eggs and bacon; and the other after a heavy midday meal. They were exactly like badly drawn figures by Blake. Then Hugh Lane brought his French pictures to Dublin, and the fairies vanished. Now each Sunday produced two slimy canvases by a would-be Jean F. Millet, and the people of Dublin bowed down and said 'how wonderful!' Then followed Monticelli, then Renoir, and then we had a lot of little Daumiers. Afterwards I lost count, but I suppose the list is still growing bigger. The pictures were all right, if they weren't taken seriously."

And there's the rub—they were and are, in a lot of places, still taken very seriously indeed. Once on a visit to his house, he brought me in, with others, to see his pictures. There they were on the floor in tiers, and seemed to be as numerous as the seed of Abraham, or the sands of the sea shore. I remember James Stephens going down to the floor on his knees to revel and roll in what he called "the lovely lights and the wonderful aspects of spaciousness."

And so with W. B. Yeats, the poet—supreme in the elegance and beauty of his own genius; but often foolish when he ventures to step outside it. He once heard of, or read about, the Noh plays of Japan. Then he swaggered into the determination to write something based on the principle of the Noh plays. And we all had to share in the importance of the idea. Now it must have taken century after century to evolve and perfect this peculiar expression of Japanese drama; but Mr. Yeats, prefacing his work with a few well chosen words, seemed to convince himself that the thing was done by fixing masks on the faces of his characters, by unfolding a cloth when the little play began, and by folding the cloth when the little play was ended. As contributions to the drama, these little plays are comparatively insignificant. They are as tree-covered hills to a little seat in a little garden. In the same way he thought he could conjure beautiful ballet at a few moments' notice onto the Abbey Theatre stage. "We want to see a great deal of the beautiful in life," he said, "and in the ballet we have the one means by which we can get beauty onto our modern stage." One means, by all means, but not the only means. But he seemed to forget that to produce good ballet—to say nothing of beautiful ballet—requires time and heart-breaking patience far beyond

the time and patience required for the production of a good or a beautiful play, in a country where ballet isn't practised. He seems to be unaware that while beautiful ballet is one of the finest things that the theatre can show, bad ballet is one of the most ridiculous things that can trot about a stage. When his own little play was being formed into a ballet, he wrote to Robinson about the music for the play, saying, "What Antheil played seemed to be the only dramatic music I have ever heard; a powerful beat, something hard and heroic. When you selected Antheil, I think it was divination!"

And yet I have heard that W. B. Yeats is practically tone deaf, and George Moore in his "Hail And Farewell," says that Yeats "wouldn't know a high note from a low one." Divination! There is too much of this Holy Spirit inspiration claimed by this little group in Ireland, who see the flame in everything they say and everything they do. The only dramatic music he had ever heard! Why, even if Antheil were the greatest composer who ever lived, he couldn't put into "Fighting the Waves" the majesty and drama that are in, say, Wagner's "Ring," for the simple reason that there wouldn't be room.

Another prominent Founder, well known in Irish and other theatrical circles, some short time ago—with the help of a partner—judged, gave, in the Tailteann Games Competition in Drama, a first prize to a play so miserable that it should not even have received a mention. In a subsequent production, the Abbey Theatre authorities put forth special efforts to make the play as impressive as possible, so as to modify the play's astonishing poverty, and give an aspect of possibility to its selection for a prize by one who ought to have known better than to have given a second thought to the thing.

These mistakes with others, sometimes sublime and sometimes ridiculous, make one dubious about the future choice of what is good and of what may be great in the literature and art of Ireland. The younger slips to be grafted onto the older body will, I fear, be no surety of perfectly free, fair and fearless selection of work for the work's sake, for I have a vivid remembrance of at least three of them trying to take the reputation of an author down a peg or two, shortly after he had refused to be a member of a group anxious to down the literary influence of the very men who have now formed this Academy in which they can shelter and gaily boo the bishops.

It will, in my opinion, be a handicap and a hindrance, instead of a help to any original and creative artist of the future. It is safe as far as G. B. Shaw and W. B. Yeats go, for, while they live, neither can become greater than he is; but can we imagine or expect the others, or most of the others, giving praise and honor and glory to an original and creative work that may place the author a little, or a lot, in front of themselves? We may feel tensely about a censorship fostered into being by a cautious bunch of bishops, but the glorified censorship by selection in the power of those who are writers themselves is a greater danger and as big a superstition as the clumsy bell, book, and candle censorship of the clergy.

Speaking of the Academy, Yeats is reported to have said that the circular had been sent to some from whom he expected to receive "infuriated replies, and who hated him and his." This was an unwise thing for him to say, for some psychologists will think that this expression is but an echo from the depths of his own sub-consciousness. I do not believe that there is one in the world who hates W. B. Yeats. To venture a criticism of some of his poems, or even some of his works, is no indication of hatred or dislike. I myself have gone about, arm in arm with him a thousand times, and sincerely hope to renew these delightful experiences more often than ever in the time to come. I will pass by this unfortunate remark that seems to be an effort to blot out honesty from any refusal by those who have been asked to join Mr. Yeats and his friends. To all new writers there will be in this Academy the full-blown, dull danger of Authority. All writers will try to please the members. A creative and original artist will try to do so, too, though he will never be able to permit himself to be plausible enough to please them, and so he will be forced to fight them. And let us remember that to write to please the members of an Academy is as much a prostitution of the mind as it would be to write to please the public.

The Editors recall with regret that Bishop Francis Asbury, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, died in Spottsylvania, Virginia, on March 31, 1816.

NOVEL VERSUS DRAMA

(Continued from Page 3, Col. 5)

is still considerable imaginative distance to go before the drama may be its simple self and tell its simple story, as the novel tells its story, without suffering the interposition of foolish and wholly unnecessary, if indeed thus far apparently uncontrollable, mechanical and personal barriers. Smaller and shallow-set stages have done much to tighten exits and entrances and save wasted time in those directions, heightened directorial speed manages on occasion to quicken drama that antecedently moved too slowly, multiplicity of scenes (harking back to Elizabeth's day) have been resorted to to get into the drama some of the novel's flexibility, and other such stratagems have continued to bring the drama a few paces nearer to the novel. But the rest still remains for tomorrow's inventiveness.

THE STRANGE FRIENDSHIP OF RELIGION AND SCIENCE

by L. M. HUSSEY

Perhaps they should not have racked Galileo to make him confess his error, but otherwise I could never see that he was unfairly treated in the controversy about earth and sun. Galileo based his notion of the movement of these bodies on an astronomical observation; the Inquisitors based theirs upon the word of God. The godly men who happened to have Galileo in hand were certainly not going to attend his babblings when Jehovah himself had had a word to say in the matter.

This antagonism between the speech of God and the speech of the scientist was in the past so profound that one would have been more hopefully occupied in an effort to render the sonnets of Shakespeare into Choctaw than in an effort to translate what God said and what the scientist said from the idiom of the one into the idiom of the other.

But lately strange things have happened. The clergy is flirting with the word of science, while science, if it has not dropped a forthright wink of invitation, has at least relaxed a former grimness about the mouth and manages an amiable smile. Apparently the man of God has suddenly discovered that Galileo may have had some right on his side. There are, of course, numberless standpatters in holy places; it is they who make possible a Scopes trial. But at present most of the holy men who find a ready welcome in the popular reviews and many of the holy men who diffuse the Word over the radio look upon the scientist as their ally and friend. Thus the Reverend Dr. Frederick R. Stamm, speaking for Protestantism, said, in *The Forum*, that "Protestantism must not fear to give a scientific interpretation of religion." Thus, in an address sent upon the air at a recent Lenten season, the Reverend Dr. Robert E. Lee Strider, Protestant Episcopal Coadjutor of West Virginia, said, "What science has to give us is undeniably the truth."

What has happened to these men of God? Have holy orders at last attracted the sort of hitherto heretical intelligence which, when confronted with the proofs, is, even against revelation, ready to admit that two and two make four? At a superficial glance it would seem so, but in order to be sure let us ask just what the priests are talking about when they use the name of science. Science has as many forms as the Old Man of the Sea. Whom do the reverend doctors quote when they find support and comfort in the words of the savants? Ernst Haeckel, the biologist? I have not heard him mentioned. Vant Hoff, the chemist? There is nothing said of him.

It soon becomes clear that when the modern religionist, with leanings toward the laboratory, talks about science, he is, as a rule, speaking of the physicists only, and not of the old Newtonian order of physicists, but of the modern, four-dimensional, cosmic-ray, curved-space physicists. The chemists, the biologists, the geologists—they give but little comfort, but in the Einsteins and the Millikans we find something for the godly to admire.

When Dr. Millikan says that his observation of the short-length cosmic rays led him to imagine the production of new substance in interstellar space, the divine doctors at once supplement this observation with the corollary that here we have a scientific demonstration of God the Father Creator.

There is a certain boldness in this logic, in this leap from a short-length wave phenomenon to the spectacle of Jehovah organizing chaos. But there is also a certain boldness in the logic of the current astro-physicists.

In the old days physics dealt solidly and simply with such matters as Newton's laws of motion and the Euclidean geometry and with two associated but separate concepts, matter and energy. All the explanations of phenomena, while they might be stated mathematically, could also be set forth substantially enough in common language.

A change began when J. J. Thompson and other physicists took up the task of interpreting the phenomena of radioactivity. The simple, changeless atoms became solar systems of electrons. The distinction between matter and energy began to vanish. The idea of absolute motion was abandoned, and it was said that motion was relative. Time and space were found to be so intimately related that time might be considered as another spacial dimension, and to express this view mathematically, equations were founded upon a modification of the non-Euclidean geometry of Georg Riemann.

These bewildering ideas of modern physics may be stated with some precision by the new mathematicians, but as soon as the physicist strives to state them in common language he becomes vague—more than vague, he becomes almost mystical. This vagueness, this mysticism, arises from the fact that the new ideas so frequently violate the evidence of our five senses. Yet all ordinary speech is grounded upon the five senses.

Thus, although the Riemannian metric may satisfactorily deal with curved space, it is saying less than nothing to tell us in words that there is no such thing as a straight line. This assertion violates all sensory experience. What the physicist needs, if he will say such things, is a whole new set of vocal symbols. Nowadays, when he talks, he not only bewilders his listener, but himself as well.

It is this vagueness, this fog of words, this stuttering of modern physics that the man of God finds congenial. Therein he is able to discover the Father Creator in cosmic rays and the Logos in the time-space continuum. And upon these bold gymnastics of the holy mind, the physicist turns an amiable and dotty smile. At present God may seem to dwell in an equation by Albert Einstein, but once that equation is put into words, God will vanish and only the devil remain.

UNSEEN AMERICA

by IVOR BROWN

"Why don't you come to America?" is a question of which I tire, not because of any injustice in it, but because of its frequency. It is a fair question and I have a fair answer. Nobody has ever offered to pay me to go there and I cannot imagine why anybody should. On the other hand, the citizens of America (or their unaccredited agents) do invite and reward some very quaint specimens of British Mind. But that is their business. Meanwhile I continue to brace myself, like a good Forsyte, smiling wanly but very stiff about the neck and upper lip, and deliver up one-quarter of my income to the British Treasury. After which a journey to the land of much appreciated dollars is far from feasible; sternly I figure it out that, having disembarked, I could just about afford to feed at a drug-store before reshipment.

Besides—and this is really more important—I know all about America. How should I not, who read the news and watch the American plays? I have my private vision of it. Out of this, I fashion my dream. Why should I go voyaging to destroy it, Travel is always a danger. It is said to broaden the mind, but usually it only hardens the arteries and shatters the illusions.

Let me therefore recount my fears. I know that the New York climate is a marvel, so bracing that I should write ten thousand words a day and then ask for work. It would be terrible to enter this aerial intoxicant and then discover that I needed alcohol as well before I could look work in the face or Earl Carroll's "Vanities" in the legs. I know that the New York stage is far more adult than the London article, far quicker, more ingenious, more ambitious. It would be terrible to go there and find one of those dreary lounge-hall comedies, which afflict my life in London, being drawn out by some odious cutie without the talent to make small talk in a manicure parlor. It would be terrible—and I believe quite possible—to find some English mimes who bore me acutely installed as the shining pillars of your last-minute Temple of Thespis.

Indeed I have foreseen all sorts of disappointments awaiting me. In the old days I might have been bidden, a privileged guest, to the Three Hours for Lunch Club, and then have discovered that the job only took two hours and a half. I know so well that American humor (unlike American lunches) moves at twice or twenty times the English speed, that you do not have long, tiresome explanations under your illustrated jokes, that you are staggeringly quick on the uptake. Fancy going to New York and finding one New Yorker reading *The New Yorker* and ponderously asking another New Yorker what that one means. I could never survive it. I have been told a hundred times by the returned English that the Negroes are just the sweetest pets and that for a walking compendium of all Christian and pagan virtues there's none like a Pullman coon. Imagine me confronted with a darkey who treated me rough and said harsh, sour things. That would be cruel. And it would be sadly unsettling to my American vision if a young woman who served me with some portion of viands didn't say "Snap into it, baby!" Even if it wasn't a nymph in a food-dive, surely somebody would bid me snap; otherwise why do you export your pert, lithe, acting ladies who fire out the "snap into it" stuff in every line of their dialogue?

Of course I know that New York is not all made of skyscrapers any more than it is all gunmen and racketeers. Most English fall down on their dream of cloud-capped palaces stretching mile on mile. I am ready for rows and rows of mean residential streets, rather scabrous and mouldering, with steps up to the door in the English suburban manner and with no power or glory anywhere about them. I expect the streets to be rather untidy, with old newspapers about, nothing like the shimmering and kempt Berlin. I have built myself a comfortable image of a Victorian New York; Gramercy Park must suggest that kind of charm, though I haven't the vaguest notion what or where it is. And there would be boarding-houses and apartments for the not so prosperous somewhere about Thirty-second Street. I vaguely remember that number and a connection with Madison Avenue. And brisk young invaders, sniffing the air of the town-to-be-conquered, would walk to the Battery and feel very maritime and Vikingish. And then go back to be ordered about the primal steps of the commercial ladder by brash Broadway Jews. And then not make good. . . . I see New York, when you cut out the bleak splendors of Riverside Drive and the rich men's castles and motion picture cathedrals, as rich in its area of melancholy humility and autumnal fascination. A visit might shatter all that and show me a city which isn't anything at all when it isn't being Broadway.

And, further afield, I have learned about the Real America, which is made up of Corn-Belts and Hog-Belts and Bible-Belts and Hook-worm Belts, belt after belt, where the Political Bosses of to-morrow are being lawyers and journalists and waiting for their big moment. And there, perhaps my American Dream must be preserved for the opposite reason. It might be true, savagely true.

Hugh Walpole

MEN OF ACTION

by H. M. TOMLINSON

M. Georges Duhamel recently published a volume of his impressions as a spectator of America. His little journey on your side astonished him—or he pretended it did. I hear his book was gravely re-proved by many American critics. They thought Duhamel had erred. On the other hand, in England, the book was accepted as a perfectly natural comment; because critics—or many of them—cannot afford to spare much time for the gentler implications of a satirist; not quite enough of it for the implications to show through the print. There are so many books to read, and we are not accustomed to undertones, for which we have to pause, should we suspect them. M. Duhamel, then felt it necessary, a short time ago, to advise European readers of his book on America that in America they could see themselves. He did so with a smile. But I don't suppose most of us this side of the waves knew what on earth he meant by it; any more than we saw that his war books condemned that dreadful outrage on intelligence we chose to call the war precisely because it was the inevitable outcome of the everyday opinions of the society which thinks scientific industrialism is as right as little apples.

We shall either send scientific industrialism to hell, or it will take us there. Or are we there, and somehow have to discover a way out? That may be it. I know little of the history of mankind's pre-occupation with the problem of good and evil. Without doubt that goes back into the past behind the pre-dynastic Egyptians. That later Zoroastrian idea of the angel of light and the angel of light's opposite, Ormuzd and Ahriman, may be as fanciful as Little Red Ridinghood. I don't know. But I have no doubt of one thing, despite the comforting sort of Christian who would cheer us up, and effect a faith cure, with the assurance that evil has no existence, if we think it has not: whether or not there is a principle of good, and another of evil, this is indeed a mysterious universe, and it ought to be plain enough to everybody today that our cleverness has released from it powers which may be the undoing of human society, unless we can discover pretty soon a way to safely bottle them up, and use them only as we need them.

In a popular British newspaper recently an enthusiastic discussion arose out of an article which had named the dozen greatest men. Correspondence poured in, with emendations and additions to the list. It was pitiful. All the names were of "men of action," as the saying is. Dear God, if only the attendant midwife in each case had but got a tip from futurity, and so a chance to save unlucky mankind from those subsequent infernal activities! But, again, here we are. The rum thing was that not one letter appeared to throw any doubt whatever on those awful benefactors. Well, we've no doubt of it now. Look around the world, that prospect of the devotions to our welfare of those great men of action! What are we going to do about that? Does it not need action of another kind, quite differently inspired? And who will start it? He must be quick, or it will be too late. Maybe, however, it is useless waiting for his appearance. Maybe it depends on us this time. Maybe it is ridiculous to sit around any longer waiting for great men to lead us. We had better try our own common sense, and see to it that it is effective where mainly needed.

We talk so freely of financiers, and statesmen, and men of business, as Great. At the same time we know perfectly well that a musician who tripped up when playing a piece, and did that not once but often, would never again be asked to play in public. If you are a musician you must not make mistakes. But the great financiers are never right. The great men of business are as helpless in this present mess as their golf caddies. They don't know. And every guess they make about it is no more valuable than if they had dived for a solution. Consider this. In Europe, from the Franco-German War till 1914, the best brains of politics and diplomacy were devising and intriguing for the welfare of the nations of Europe. All of those great men of action were realists. They derided sentiment, and the men of business, who never are sentimentalists, supported them. As any miserable undernourished poet could have explained for them, reality is phantasmagoric, and sentiment is whatever you fancy. So on those great men went—the most flamboyant of all sentimental romanticists, though they did not know it. Each of them had a clearly defined policy, varied from year to year, to enhance the power and glory of his people; and finance put its money on him. Those men used uncounted public wealth, and the immeasurable industry of myriads of humble folk, to further their aims, aims never specifically divulged, aims too noble and good to be published. Yet they were sleepless in pursuit of those ideals, the righteousness of which they never doubted.

And what happened? The war came, made inevitable by their activities. Great Statesmen! Great Diplomats! The war ended, and we see now that nothing was achieved of all their aims. They were all wrong. Not one of their ideals was reached. They were all wrong, all of them, and all of the time. Their astute activities, their realism, their patriotism, and the outpouring of wealth and labor in support, succeeded in the end in overturning nearly every throne in Europe, releasing Lenin to power, and begging the lot of us. Men of action! If only these fellows were born with a bit of red worsted tied to the great toe! Then cunning midwives could recognize them, and would know what to do.

Wanted: Five dollars in gold. Any National Bank. Apply Sunday, side-door.—Adv.